

## Dear Joe, I'm a no-show

I know you're busy preparing for your big day on Thursday and that you have a lot on your mind, like how you're going to get through a long speech about unity while you gaze out over 25,000 soldiers protecting you from your fellow American citizens, but I just thought you deserved an RSVP to your invitation. Oh, I know that I wasn't invited, personally, to the inauguration, but I wanted to reply, anyway.

Somehow I think that I will not be the only one who will be busy doing something more important than watching you take the oath of office on the 20<sup>th</sup>. The number could be in the tens of millions who don't see your election as being completely above board and therefore worthy of celebrating. I'm sure that the 80 million who did vote for you (some of which were actual legitimate votes) will be rooting you on as you stand before the TV cameras and give us a non-stop recitation of how critical this time in history is and how much we all need to 'come together' and that you're the 'big guy' that can do it.

I'm sure we will hear you tick off the boxes about systemic racism and police brutality (to please BLM and the other Black activists that you have been pandering to for decades), climate peril (to please the Left greenies), the dangers of Trump insurrectionism (to please all the hawks in your Party), the growth of the military industrial complex (to please the anti-military gang), our 'inhumane' immigration policy (to placate the Hispanic voters and all the illegal aliens in the USA), the need for a 'revolution' in renewables (to please the anti-fossil fuel crowd) and gender tenderness (to appease the alternative lifestyle LGBTQXYZ folks). Then there's all those crises we must address (that you say Trump ignored) like the spread of the Coronavirus and Russia, Russia, and of course our failing economy (which was, of course, all Trump's fault).

I can hardly wait for the part about being true to the Constitution as you will soon attempt to deny millions of gun owners the right to live in peace without fear of gun confiscations, or maybe we'll hear about your superficial support for redressing some of the censorship problems presented by the tech giants (despite your willingness to take their campaign donations). And no inauguration speech would be complete without tugging at our heartstrings and talking about our Founding Fathers' hopes for forming a more perfect union and that you will be the new Moses leading the oppressed people (all except the White supremacists) out from under the grip of the evil Trumpists to the Promised Land (a bone to the religious demographic).

I do not expect an Obama-like gaze toward the Heavens from you while you speak because you could not find your place back to the teleprompter if you did. No, you will give us all the famous Biden 'squint' as you mark your place in history with a mix of whispered rhetoric and tough-guy talk. Joe, I've seen this movie before. It's a rerun of all of the Democrats' palaver that passes for promises. Oh, it will resonate with your base. But please remind me, again. Who is that, anyway? It's not the Left of your party and it can't be the middle because there's no middle left. It's certainly not the youngsters because they wanted Bernie Sanders. Nor is it the moderates because they're nowhere to be found - gone with the wind.

So tell me again, who will you be speaking to? Oh, I see. It's the MEDIA and the deep-pocketed Democratic donors on Wall Street and the corporate CEOs and the lobbyists and all the community organizers and the academicians, and of course, every Republican-hater that can walk or crawl. And the world leaders. I forgot about them - the ones who hated Trump's forcefulness and his insistence on putting U.S. interests first. I get it. You want to curry favor with the globalists, the Europeanists, the one-worlders who long for getting the U.S. re-involved in the Paris Climate Accords and the TPP and TTIP and the Iran Nuclear Deal and maybe membership in the International Criminal Court.

You're bound to talk about the *Four Horsemen of the American Apocalypse*: the Coronavirus and how Trump failed to lead; the economy that Trump failed to stimulate; the worsening global warming crisis that Trump ignored; and of course your favorite of all four, systemic racism, that Trump and his followers denied as America watched BLM supporters and others torch our cities.

Yes, I understand it all now. You are going to govern us during these crises by using 'emergency powers' to clamp down on all that irritating free speech and the dangerous hoarding of firearms and of our impatience with all the insane mask-wearing, social distancing and lockdowns we've been experiencing this past year. Aha. You're calling it 'soft power' as opposed to martial law, but you're not ruling out the use of the military when it comes to suppressing all those who resist your politics are you? I thought so. It's always best to have the generals on your side. We've learned that from all the political take-overs we've seen around the world.

I suppose you'll mention China in your speech, won't you? And how important it is that we all 'get along' (omitting of course any reference to your son whose investigation on influence-peddling you've scotched). Yes, the same China that has been stealing our intellectual property, patents, jobs and is now sabre-rattling all over Asia and Southeast Asia and who has been steadily building up its military and infiltrating our Congress. That China. You'll weave this into a few minutes of rebuilding our global relationships and the importance of America being 'a good neighbor' especially to Mexico (as caravans of thousands of would-be illegal immigrants to America make their way north through that country).

Yes, Joe, I'll have better things to do on Thursday than listen to you regurgitate your former boss's greatest hits. I'll be busy thinking of ways I can make you a one-term President, taking back the House and Senate in 24 months and holding those who would limit our personal freedoms like speech, assembly and worship, accountable. Yes, they're the same ones you've talked about for 47 years but done nothing about. Have a nice day.

*Stephan Helgesen is a retired career U.S. diplomat who lived and worked in 30 countries for 25 years during the Reagan, G.H.W. Bush, Clinton, and G.W. Bush Administrations. He is the author of ten books, four of which are on American politics and has written over 1,100 articles on politics, economics and social trends. He operates a political news story aggregator website, [www.projectpushback.com](http://www.projectpushback.com). He can be reached at: [stephan@stephanhelgesen.com](mailto:stephan@stephanhelgesen.com)*